

For Students Entering 8th Grade 🧐

Dear Parent/Guardian and Student,

Essayist Joseph Addison once wrote, **“Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.”** Just as young people need regular physical activity to stay strong, they also need regular reading to keep their minds active and growing. Research shows that time spent reading supports academic success, vocabulary development, standardized-test performance, positive attitudes toward reading, and world knowledge (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw & Rycik, 1999).

With this in mind, **Fox Lane Middle School English teachers ask each incoming 8th grade student to read two books of their choice over the summer.** During the first few weeks of school, students will complete an assignment based on the books they read.

Students may choose to read the **FOX READ community book** for grades 5–8, ***Into the Rapids by Ann Braden***. In this novel, Addy is looking forward to attending the survival camp where her parents met when a super-storm cuts her home off from the main road. She wonders if she'll even be able to go to camp, while her mom struggles to cope with memories of Addy's dad dying in a similar storm. Addy keeps running into her neighbor, Caleb, as they search for cell service. They haven't been friends before, but is Addy partially to blame? When Caleb offers to get her to camp, she takes a leap of faith and agrees to travel with him by canoe. This is the biggest test of her survival skills yet, but more importantly, Addy begins to understand that she's not in this adventure of life alone—and that's a good thing.

For each book, students are required to **answer one (1) question** from each category below, **three (3) questions per book**. These responses should be written on index cards and brought to school the first week back.

CHARACTERS

- Identify a character that you liked / disliked and explain your reasoning.
- Does anyone in this book remind you of someone you know? Explain.

PLOT

- Do any incidents, actions or ideas remind you of your own life or something that happened to you? Explain.
- How does the title of the book fit with the action? Explain. Can you think of a better one? Explain.
- What would you change about this story to make it better? Explain.

OVER ALL

- What do you feel is the most important phrase, passage, or paragraph in the book? Explain.
- If you were an English teacher, would you want to share this work with your students? Why or why not?
- Would you suggest this book or author to 8th graders? Explain.

Happy Reading,

Fox Lane Middle School English Teachers